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Delivery Wars and More High Tech News!

Delivery Wars eBay vs. Amazon vs. Google; US Intelligence Tech Advances against Foreign Terrorists; New Tech Tools for Federal and Local Law Enforcement; NSA's Boondoggle? Problems at New Utah Data Center; Computers That Program Themselves; New Public Technology for Guiding, Nudging...Punishing?; The Latino Start-up Scene; Tech Start-ups in Asia and the Middle East.

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Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
Changing from Windows 7 Ultimate to Windows 8.1; Chrome Jerky; Taskbar Key Combinations.

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by Marilyn K. Martin

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Digital Dave

"Digital Dave answers your tech questions." by *Digital Dave*

Changing from Windows 7 Ultimate to Windows 8.1; Chrome Jerky; Taskbar Key Combinations.

Changing from Windows 7 Ultimate to Windows 8.1

Dear Digital Dave,

I have been a follower for at least eight years. I currently have Windows 7 Ultimate on my desktop and laptop and am able to remotely access my desktop from my laptop. Is Windows 8.1 available to download directly or do I have to download Windows 8 first? Will Window 8 affect my ability to remotely access my desktop? If I will have problems, then I will stay with Windows 7.
John
San Diego, CA

Dear John,

Since you have Windows 7, you can upgrade directly to Windows 8.1. You should use the Windows 8.1 Upgrade Assistant before you attempt an upgrade. (For people who have Windows Vista or XP, they will need to install Windows 8 first, then upgrade to Windows 8.1, unless it is a clean install from a DVD. There is a separate page of instructions for upgrading from Windows Vista and XP.) It is important to use the Upgrade Assistant because not all computers are capable of running Windows 8—even if they had Windows 7 installed. (Jack Dunning's book *Misunderstanding Windows 8* has a cautionary chapter about upgrading older computers.)

If you upgrade to Windows 8.1, as long as you are set up to accept Remote Desktop connections you should be able to access the machine the same way you did with Windows 7. There have been some issues with accessing Virtual Private Network (VPN). For example, I had to manually add LogMeIn Hamachi to my Windows 8.1 computer before I could access other computers remotely.

I expect that these Windows 8.1 issues will be worked out in the long term. However, if Windows 7 is doing everything that you want and you don't care about the Modern apps in

Windows 8, then there are few compelling reasons to upgrade right now. While Windows 8 does offer a little more speed, Windows 7 computers will be around for a long time.

Digital Dave

Chrome Jerky

Dear Digital Dave,

I look forward to reading your article every Friday. And because of you I have solved a lot of computer problems on my own, but I have a problem in which I can't find a solution.

My Chrome Web browser worked well up until a couple of months ago. It has a two second delay when I scroll (amazingly annoying). And there is a slight delay when I type. I have searched for a solution online, but the results always refer to jerky YouTube playback. I do have that problem too, but those solutions don't work. I have tried the Chrome extensions "Chrome Wheel Smooth Scroller," "Smooth Scroll" and "Logitech Smooth Scrolling." I've turned all my extensions on and off and nothing seems to make it better.

I notice a slight delay in Microsoft Internet Explorer, but it is tolerable, Mozilla Firefox works flawlessly. I have removed and re-installed the program, tried to go back to an earlier save point, nothing fixes the problem.

I could live with Firefox, but it is frustrating that I can't make Chrome work. Would you have a suggestion?
Dave Bisbee
Chula Vista, CA

Dear Dave,

It sounds like a Chrome rendering problem. There are a couple of settings that may help. In Settings => Show advance settings … check to see if "Use hardware acceleration when available" is checked. Also, you may try unchecking "Check for server certificate revocation" under HTTPS/SSL. Some people have had results with this.

It could also be that there is other processor activity that's interfering with Chrome. Chrome can be a little more susceptible to interference since it starts a separate process for every tab. I would look for what changes outside of Chrome were made just prior to noticing the problem. Some software, especially if it accesses the Internet frequently can cause slowdowns with other software such as Web browsers.

I don't know if you use gadgets—available in Windows Vista and Windows 7. If so, you may want to eliminate them—especially if the use the Internet for frequent updates (WebCams,

stock quotes, weather gadgets, etc). I've found that just a few of these gadgets can affect other Internet dependent software performance.

Of course, the old standby answer is that you may have a virus taking up processor time. It's always worth a check or two.

Digital Dave

Taskbar Key Combinations in Windows 7 and Windows 8

Using Numbers to Open, Minimize and Maximize Windows

This Windows technique has been around for a while, but never came into its own until the Quick Launch buttons and task buttons were combined in Windows 7 (and continues in Windows 8). Some people might think "Everyone knows that!", but it's surprising how many people who have been using Windows for years still have no idea.

The first ten Quick Launch buttons are secretly numbered from one to zero for the purpose of starting programs (see Figure 1). Hold down the Windows key (⊞) and hit the number of the Quick Launch button. The program will load.
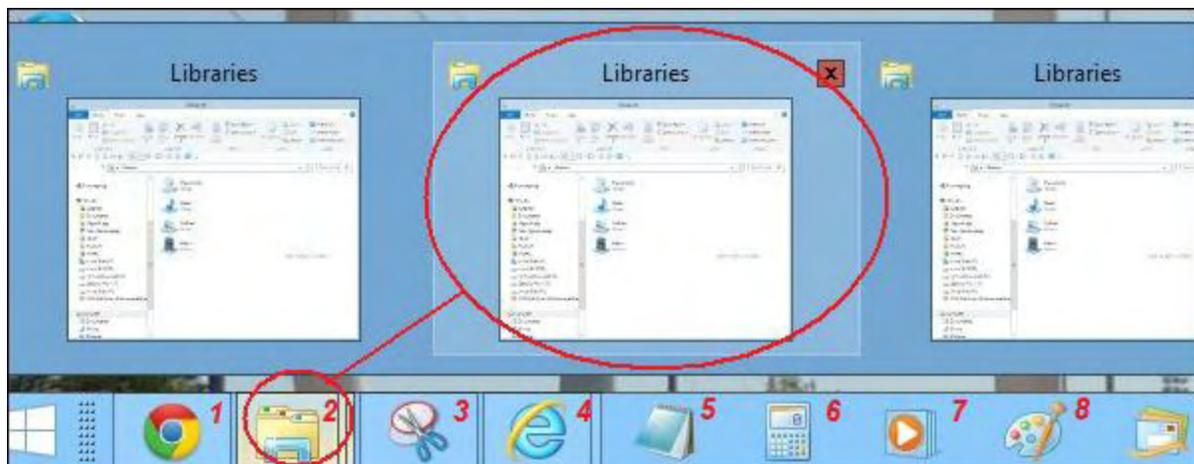

Figure 1. The Quick Launch buttons are numbered 1 through 0. In this case using WIN+2 opens Windows File Explorer in Windows 8. When multiple windows are open, continuing to hit the number 2 while holding down the WIN key cycles through the window thumbnails.

Once the program is loaded, the task button is semi-hidden behind the Quick Launch button (or vice versa). If only one instance of the program is open, using the Windows key (⊞) plus

the number again will minimize the window—acting like a minimize/maximize toggle—just it does in earlier versions of Windows. If multiple windows are open, then continuing to hold down ⊞ while hitting the number will cycle through the open thumbnails for selection.

If you want to launch another instance of a program, then hold down the SHIFT key while using the same key combination (SHIFT+⊞+number). This works in the same way as SHIFT plus left mouse click on the button.

If you keep your Quick Launch buttons in the same order in Windows 7 and Windows 8, you may find that these hidden key combinations are a great help.

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Delivery Wars eBay vs. Amazon vs. Google

The New York Times (through the *Seattle Times*) reported in November 2013 that eBay has now promised New York City shoppers that their Valet Delivery will shop-and-deliver in about an hour. The eBay Valets are really personal shoppers, and travel by bike or car in Chicago, and parts of New York City and San Francisco. eBay hopes its pizza-delivery model will beat out Amazon's same-day delivery now offered in 11 cities, after Amazon built 96 massive warehouses (or fulfillment centers) close to major cities, in anticipation of launching a faster delivery model than overnight delivery.

In September 2013, *FashionPulseDaily* ran a glowing review of eBay Now's Valet Delivery Service, and explains how it works. If you live in one of the three urban areas eBay's Valet Delivery works, you can log into your eBay account 9AM-9PM, Monday through Saturday (9AM-6PM on Sunday), and scroll through retailers' merchandise from stores as diverse as Radio Shack, Target or Walgreens. You choose your items, pay (order minimum is $25, with a $5 delivery per store), and get your purchased items at your door in around an hour. From order to delivery, eBay Now's order status page (and optional text notifications) keeps the shopper up-to-date, with even a contact number for the assigned valet if the shopper is time-pressed and needs to make that "Where are you now?" call.

"I liked the holidays so much better before Amazon started delivering packages with drones."

Not to be outdone, Amazon created some delivery-buzz in December 2013, promising (eventual) half-hour shipping by drones through Amazon Prime Air. In a recent *60 Minutes* segment, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos showed off drones (or octocopters) that can deliver packages up to 5 pounds in less than half an hour, and can travel up to 10 miles from an Amazon fulfillment-center. Amazon is currently working out the regulations, and thinks that they are still 4-5 years from drone-delivery.

Curiously, there is already a drone-delivery service set to start delivering textbooks in Australia next year, called Zookal, and hopes to bring its drone-delivery service to the US by 2015. There will be an Android app to track the drone's progress offered at launch. The drone will hover but not land, with the ordered textbook "lowered" by a tap of a button on a smartphone. (I wonder if the button reads "Catch!")

Google also has a Shopping Express operating in San Francisco and San Jose, which promises "same-day delivery." And a *New York Times* article (through the *Seattle Times*) in December 2013 reveals that Google too is working on robotic delivery of products. Google has recently acquired seven technical companies in the US and Japan, in an effort to create a new generation of robots. Although Google's current target for their robotics is electronics assembly, they have also expressed an interest in eventually competing with Amazon in retail by automating portions of an existing supply chain, ending with robotic delivery to customers' doorsteps. Another delivery start-up is Deliv out of Palo Alto, which will aim to deliver online purchases, and is currently between finished trials and a full launch.

US Intelligence Tech Advances against Foreign Terrorists

The world turned into a more dangerous place after 9/11. In gearing up to deal with this new terrorism danger on US soil, technological advances in "better detection and security" took on a new urgency. In August 2013, Intelligence Community ran a story how Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California has developed an "optical gas minicell sensor" that can remotely detect and identify trace gases. The sensor is wireless-compatible, operates with low power, and can detect and analyze a trace gas from a biological weapon to a by-product of explosives or radiological exposure.

Intelligence Community News reported in September 2013 that the State of California has awarded GridCOM a $95,000 grant to help protect the country's vulnerable electrical grid from a cyber-attack. GridCOM has already demonstrated their "unhackable encryption technology" to better secure America's electrical grid of 30 million devices that rely on machine-to-machine communications, which are often less secure that personal online shopping accounts.

The Washington Post ran a story in December 2013 on how the FBI's created-malware to spy on suspects doesn't always work. Court documents revealed the story of "Mo," a man with dark hair and a foreign accent, who made a series of threats to detonate bombs at US universities and airports last year (2012). But the FBI's elite hacker team couldn't find him, so they designed a piece of malicious software to be delivered when Mo signed into his Yahoo e-mail account—from any computer in the world. Mo is still at large, although his newest IP addresses suggest he is still in Tehran.

An article in the *New York Times* in December 2013 revealed how American and British spies have now infiltrated the fantasy worlds of global video games, to conduct worldwide surveillance and gather data on possible terrorists. Since militants/terrorists often rely on features common in video games—like fake identities, voice and text chats—intelligence operatives feared that terrorist or criminal networks could use video games to secretly communicate, plot attacks or move around money. So the spies have created make-believe characters to try and recruit informers, while collecting data and communications between players. According to documents leaked by Edward Snowden, so many federal spies were hunting around in Second Life, that a "deconfliction" group was needed to avoid spy-on-spy collisions.

New Tech Tools for Federal and Local Law Enforcement

It is also a given that the US intelligence community has a super-secure technological infrastructure that is not available to the public. *WashingtonBusinessJournal* ran a story in September 2013 that a few thousand intelligence community employees were recently given the chance to test new desktop configurations, a cloud infrastructure and an apps store set up as "baseline capabilities" under the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's Intelligence Community IT Enterprise program. In November 2013, Yahoo!Finance revealed that the US Intelligence Community (IC) has their own secret and secure internet called Intelink. One program on Intelink is modeled on Twitter and called eCHIRP, which allows analysts in the IC's 17 distinct organizations to safely discuss breaking news across all the IC agencies.

The Washington Post ran a story in July 2013 about how the spread of cheap but powerful license plate reader cameras has helped police everywhere build databases on the movement of millions of Americans. The cameras are mounted along major roadways, and in police cruisers and government vehicles. These allow law enforcement to instantly identify cars, and compare

them to "hot lists" of vehicles that have been stolen or involved in crimes. But the system collects records on every license plate they encounter, and puts them in databases that may or may not be systematically purged, creating privacy concerns.

In June 2013, the *Washington Post* ran a story about how the photos of more than 120 million people in the US are in [searchable photo databases](), that state and federal authorities have access to. Paired with surveillance video and facial-recognition software, criminal investigators can now identify suspects, accomplices and even innocent bystanders who may have witnessed something crucial.

NSA's Boondoggle? Problems at New Utah Data Center

In October 2013, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes* reported that the National Security Agency's (NSA) new billion-dollar-plus data center in Bluffdale, Utah, had to delay their September opening by a year, due to [massive electrical problems](). The "country's biggest spy center" had been fast-tracked, and "regular quality controls in design and construction" were by-passed. So far there have been ten meltdowns in 13 months, mainly "arc failures" from putting the appliances too close together, which resulted in fiery explosions, melted metal and circuit failure—destroying hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of machinery.

The Salt Lake Tribune also reported in October 2013 that water consumption at the NSA Center has been [wildly inconsistent](), ranging from no usage one day to amounts vastly over what they planned to use the next. Another article in the paper in November 2013 might explain some of the mysterious water usage spikes, by revealing that Utah firefighters are frequent visitors to the NSA data center, when heat sensors or smoke detectors activate their [sprinkler system](). But of the 12 fire alarms firefighters have responded to in 2013 so far, records state that the firefighters found no emergencies when they arrived. The NSA center blames the calls on malfunctioning fire-detectors—with no mention of the rumored electrical problems.

The paper also reported in October 2013 that an anti-NSA group has been [approved to "adopt"]() the section of highway running past the Utah Data Center, which could see the protest-oriented group's signs just outside the spy building. But the paper also ran several stories on how the state of Utah and Bluffdale lobbied hard to bring the NSA data center there, so the protestors may not make the impact they want. In August, the Salt Lake paper revealed that former Gov. John Huntsman had stated that he would [not raise electrical rates]() on the center for six years. And the town of Bluffdale hopes to use the new infrastructure built for the data center to [attract new business]() to the area, including government contractors.

Computers That Program Themselves

Programming vast amounts of data into a computer can be time-consuming and expensive. So the newest innovation is computers which can program themselves, starting with available technology. *Wired* ran a story in March 2013 on how the Pentagon's blue-sky agency, DARPA, was ready to launch a four-year project to boost AI systems by building computers that can teach themselves. The idea is to build computers that learn and evolve, using algorithms to parse through vast amounts of data and then select the most suited to its task. So far, DARPA appears to be just soliciting bids.

MIT's *Technology Review* reported in July 2013 that a start-up called Diffbot was using machine-learning algorithms to teach computers to understand Internet pages. The company offers several application programming interfaces (APIs) that helps computers "read" different components of Internet pages, picking out "article" features like headlines, text, pictures or tags, while a "product" API can look at a page and extract image and price. Diffbot CEO and cofounder Mike Tung thinks the last API will appeal to online retailers who want to scour the Internet to keep an eye on their competitors' changing prices. Such visual analyzation techniques will also benefit the public, as we increasingly access the Internet from smaller mobile screens.

NextBigFuture in November 2013 reported on the Carnegie Mellon computer teaching itself "common sense" by visually analyzing millions of images on the Internet. Using a computer program called the Never Ending Image Learner (NEIL), the computer runs itself non-stop (24 hours a day), using recent advances that enable computer programs to identify and label objects in images. Humans are part of the process mainly to correct errors, since NEIL might think that "Pink" is just a singer, rather than a color.

Free "Machine Learning" college courses are also available, such as this Coursera class out of technology giant, Stanford. And although many scientists have abandoned the idea of modeling Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the human brain, the University of Toronto currently offers a course through Coursera in "Neural Networks for Machine Learning". These neural-nets are at the heart of new practical computer applications mentioned above, from speech and object recognition to image retrieval.

New Public Technology for Guiding, Nudging...Punishing?

New Scientist ran an article in November 2013 about an experiment at the Technical University of Denmark, where 1,000 undergraduate volunteers have the exact same kind of phone they take everywhere. The phones track the students' movements as well as their every call and text message. The data is then analyzed and may be used to "nudge" individual students into changing their behavior, such as identifying activities that might help or hinder their studies. The program is very controversial, with warnings of behavior-modification/manipulation on one side, against desires to improve student mental health and

academic performance on the other.

In December 2013, Yahoo!Finance ran a story on Apple's new [customer-tracking technology](#) for its 254 US stores. Called [iBeacon](#), it can track you as you wander around an Apple Store by interacting with your iPhone or iPad. It can give you turn-by-turn directions to find an item on a shelf, alert you to deals as you walk by, and later notify you when an order is ready for pickup. iBeacon has already been adopted by Major League Baseball to enhance fan experiences in ballparks. Other similar in-store locator programs are [ShopKick](#) and NearBuy which has recently been acquired by [RetailNext](#).

DailyBeast ran a curious story in December 2013 on how the just-released game console, Xbox One, is [punishing players](#) for swearing. The Xbox One listens as you play, and when expletives are shouted at the screen, certain sports games (like FIFA14 and NBA2K14) will react by giving the player a technical foul. Despite shades of Big Brother is Listening, this reviewer thinks this "always-listening, behavior-changing tech" could be beneficial if used to shut down toxic players, who ruin the online gaming experience for everyone. Xbox Live already uses a new metric to achieve the same goal, by putting each gamer into one of three categories: Good player, Needs improvement, and Avoid me.

[Riot Games](#) is also attacking toxic player behavior by putting them before tribunals. China's Tencent Holdings bought a majority stake in Riot Games in 2011, but it is unknown if they have any hand in these toxic-player tribunals.

The Latino Start-up Scene

In March 2013, Micstura Marketing reported on the [start-up landscape](#) in Latin America. Chili has a government initiative to attract early stage entrepreneurs, and has passed a law where entrepreneurs can open a company at zero cost up front in just one day over the Web. And Argentina has some accelerators, [NXTP Labs](#) and [Wayra](#), among others, that provide financing, space and advice for start-ups. The start-up ecology in Latin America also benefits from a combo start-up-blog and social media site, [PulsoSocial](#), which is trying to encourage start-up initiatives in other Latin countries.

In September 2013, *Mercury News* (through *SiliconValley*) ran a story about a [Google-backed incubator](#) to inspire American Latinos to launch start-ups. Edward Avila, a Silicon Valley tech veteran, has co-founded and is now CEO of [Manos Accelerator](#). Based in San Jose, California, other Latino tech leaders praised the move, but cautioned it will be tough sledding. They charge that Latino parents tend to urge their children to land steady jobs rather than risk starting their own businesses, as well as the drop-out rate for Latinos in the US. Another barrier is the few Hispanics in big venture capital firms and mega-tech giants like Google and Yahoo to tap for financing and connections.

Tech Start-ups in Asia and the Middle East

TechInAsia reported in May 2013 on [Asia's Top Tech Cities](). Singapore, Tokyo, and Beijing and Shanghai in China top the list. Singapore supposedly has the most developed start-up ecosystem in the region and is the first stop in Asia for a majority of westerners, and is poised to become the largest off-shore wealth center by 2020.
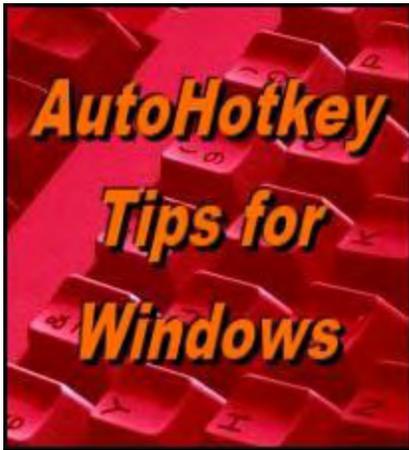
SiliconValley reported in November 2013 that despite the turmoil in the MidEast, they are fostering a burgeoning tech scene, with some of the [most innovative start-ups]() coming from the Arab world. Based on Christopher Schroeder's new book, *Startup Rising*, entrepreneurs from Jordan to United Arab Emirates to Turkey are building e-commerce sites, social networks and online education tools that rival Silicon Valley's best.

Schroeder says crowdfunding is essential for this start-up revolution in the MidEast, but Dave McClure's [Geeks on a Plane](), an invitation-only tour for start-ups, investors and executives to learn about burgeoning technology markets, took its latest trip to the Middle East in November 2013. Google is also funding start-ups there, and Yahoo has purchased Maktoob, the region's most popular Web portal.

Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. Besides short stories published in various magazines, she also has some new e-books available on Amazon Kindle: [Hunting Monster Aliens]() is an on-going series of novellas, about a wise-cracking team of ghost investigators who occasionally turn into alien-monster hunters. [*Culture Crash! A California Yankee Transplanted to Texas*]() is a collection of humor essays chronicling her adventures in her new home-state.

Twelve months (July 2012 through June 2013) of Marilyn's [Little Known High Tech]() series has been compiled into an almanac (with a complete index) available exclusively at Amazon. If you want a quick reference for the obscure or unusual in computers and the Internet over the last year, then [check it out]().

ComputorEdge E-Books has converted many of Marilyn's computer humor columns into four e-books. Now available in a four-book Kindle bundle from Amazon.com [*The Best Computer and Internet Humor, Anecdotes, and Jokes Found on the Web*](). Marilyn's collection of the funniest stories about our computing machines and how we use them at home, the office, and in cyber space. Save 25% off the individual book price!

Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part IV

"Moving the Recipe Ingredients Up and Down in the TreeView List" by Jack Dunning
Since the recipe ingredients should be in preparation order, we need a way to swap the branches around. Here is a trick for moving ingredients up and down the list.

If you're new to AutoHotkey, the material in this column may seem a little confusing. However, there are thousands of simple things that you can do on your Windows computer with AutoHotkey which will make your computing life so much better—and they're easy to do. For a quick look, check out this page: Introduction to AutoHotkey: A Review and Guide for Beginners.

As of last week, the RecipeTree app can read data from a file and save changes made to the recipes and ingredients to the same file. The next problem is changing the order of the ingredients within a recipe. Although we have yet to write the code for adding/deleting recipes and ingredients, this week we will concentrate on how to move the ingredients once they are in the app. The goal is to add subroutines which will move an ingredient up or down the recipe ingredient list when using the hotkey combinations CTRL+UP ARROW and CTRL+DOWN ARROW respectively as shown in Figure 1.
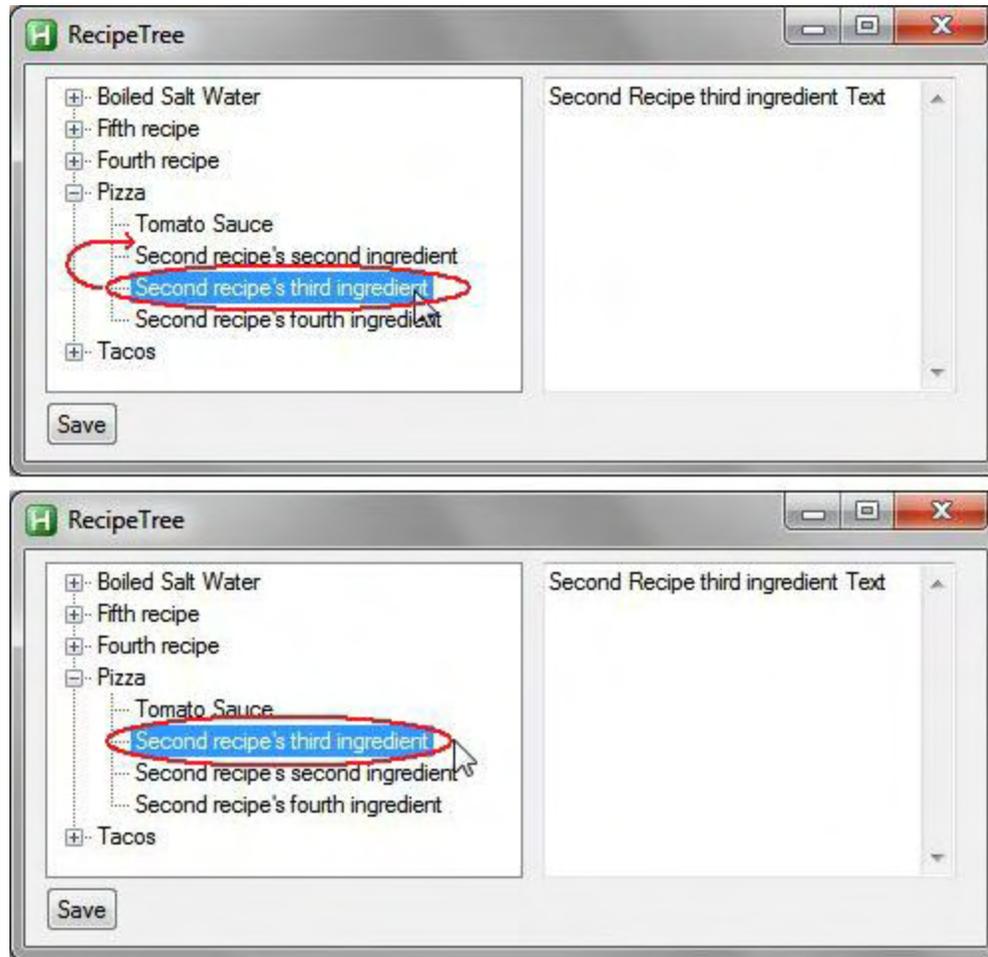
Figure 1. Using the hotkey combinations CTRL+UP ARROW and CTRL+DOWN ARROW moves an ingredient up (as shown) and down the list of ingredients within a recipe.

Note: I could have just as easily started with features for adding and deleting branches of the TreeView. When writing a script there is often a logical order for developing different portions of the script, but at times there are a number of features which could be added in parallel. It is merely a matter of personal choice and in this case I found that changing the order of the branches was a more challenging problem. Next week we'll look at adding/deleting items.

Sorting the Recipes

The first thing you may note in Figure 1 is that the recipes are now in alphabetical order based on the recipe name. Since there may be any number of recipes added to the app, it makes sense to sort them alphabetically. This is a relatively simple step accomplished when the data file is read. Originally, the recipes names were added from the CSV data file with the following:

```
RecipeID := TV_Add(RowData3)
```

which added the recipes in the order they appear in the file. By using the *Sort* option in the TV_Add() TreeView function each recipe is added to the TreeView in alphabetical order:

```
RecipeID := TV_Add(RowData3,0,"Sort")
```

The 0 parameter tells AutoHotkey to add the branch at the top level (recipe name). While this may not be the same order that originally appeared in the data file, if the *Save* button is clicked, the new CSV data file will reflect that order.

Later when new recipes are added they will not necessarily be in alphabetical order until after saved to the data file and reloaded. If you want the *Save* button to alphabetize after it saves the data, then the Reload command might be added to the end to the *UpdateFile()* function discussed last week. However, this will cause the entire app to reload and you will lose any manual adjustments made to the window size and location.

An alternative for sorting a changed recipe name is to use:

```
TV_Modify(0, "Sort")
```

which will sort all the top level recipes alphabetically. This can be added to a button, dropdown menu, or any other appropriate label (subroutine). I temporarily added it to the *Save:* label, but I suspect that there will be a better place for it when dropdown menus for adding and deleting branches are included. This is less obtrusive than using the *Reload* command.

Moving the Ingredient Branches

While it is easy to add new branches at a specific location or sorted alphabetically, once a branch is in place there is no function for moving it to a new location. That means moving a branch is actually a two-step process. First, the branch must be copied and added at the desired location with the *TV_Add()* function. This generates a new *ItemID* and all variables constructed with the *ItemID* must be created. Second, the original branch must be deleted.

Looking over the *TreeView* functions, there are a few which will retrieve the information we need. The first is *TV_GetSelection()* which returns the *ItemID* of the selected branch to be moved. With this *ItemID* we can capture both the name of the branch with *TV_GetText(OutputVariable,ItemID)* and the text in the associated *MyEdit* field (*%ItemID%text*).

The next is *TV_GetParent(ItemID)* which identifies the parent to the current group of branches. This is important because the movement will only be within this group.

We need to use either *TV_GetPrev()* (for moving up) or *TV_GetNext()* (for moving down) to identify where to add the new branch. When using the *TV_Add(Name, [ParentItemID,*

Options]) function to add the new branch, if *Options* is a number, it is assumed to be the *ItemID* of the branch after which the new branch will be added.

I started with the move up routine since it is just a little more complicated than moving a branch down. Because *TV_Add(..., ..., ItemID)* inserts the new branch *after* the identified item, the branch two steps up (the branch previous to the previous branch) must be used to move the selected branch to the right place. When moving down, all you need is the *ItemID* of the next branch.

First the current selected branch is identified and stored to the variable *ThisOne*:

```
ThisOne := TV_GetSelection()
```

Next, the *TV_GetText()* function is used to save the name of the branch to the variable *MoveName*:

```
TV_GetText(MoveName,ThisOne)
```

The data in the associated *MyEdit* field is saved to the variable *EditText*:

```
EditText := % %Thisone%text
```

Remember from previous columns that the data in the text field was saved in a variable created from combining the *ItemID* and the word "text" as the name of the variable. The value of the varible *%Thisone%text* (e.g. 8769040text) would contain the *MyEdit* data for that branch. The first % above forces the evaluation of the rest of the expression which sets the variable *EditText* to the data in the *MyEdit* field.

This gives us everything we need to add the branch up one place before the previous branch:

```
NewAdd :=TV_Add(MoveName, TV_GetParent(ThisOne), TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne)))
```

Note that it is not the previous branch being used as the insertion point, but the branch previous to the previous branch (*TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne))*).

Now the new variable for the *MyEdit* text data is created with the *ItemID* from the newly added branch:

```
%NewAdd%text := EditText
```

This newly added branch is now an exact duplicate of the original. All that's left to do is deleting the old branch:

```
TV_Delete(ThisOne)
```

For good measure, we select the new branch to make it look as if the old branch has merely moved:

```
TV_Modify(NewAdd, "Select")
```

This happens so fast that it looks like the branch is merely popping up one line.

There is a potential problem here. What if the selected item is the first or second item in the list? If it is first, there is nowhere to move up to. If it is second there is no item previous to the previous item—only the parent.

In the first case (the branch is the first in the list), the following conditional:

```
If TV_GetPrev(ThisOne) != 0
```

is used to determine if anything should be done. If the previous branch is not a parent, then the routine runs.

In the second case (the branch is the second in the list), the following conditional:

```
If TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne)) != 0
```

checks to see if the branch previous to the previous is a parent. If so, then the selected branch must be made the *First* branch:

```
If TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne)) != 0
```

If it is the parent, then the new branch is added with the *First* option:

```
NewAdd :=TV_Add(MoveName, TV_GetParent(ThisOne), "First")
```

These lines of code are all included as part of the routine that moves a *TreeView* branch up in RecipeTree. They are enclosed in with the hotkey combination CTRL+UPARROW (^Up::) and the *Return* command as follows:

```
^Up::
  ThisOne := TV_GetSelection()
  If TV_GetPrev(ThisOne) != 0
  {
    TV_GetText(MoveName,ThisOne)
    EditText := % %Thisone%text
    If TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne)) != 0
     {
       NewAdd :=TV_Add(MoveName, TV_GetParent(ThisOne), TV_GetPrev(TV_GetPrev(ThisOne)
     }
    Else
     {
       NewAdd :=TV_Add(MoveName, TV_GetParent(ThisOne), "First")
     }
    %NewAdd%text := EditText
    TV_Delete(ThisOne)
    TV_Modify(NewAdd, "Select")
  }
```

```
Return
```

Whenever CTRL+UPARROW is pressed, the selected ingredient will move up one tree branch—unless it is the first ingredient in the recipe.

To limit that the hotkey combinations to only working when the RecipeTree window is active the following code is added:

```
#IfWinActive, RecipeTree
```

I placed all of the hotkeys at the end of the AHK script with the above code placed just before them ensuring that the hotkeys were limited to this app.

Moving Down

The move down routine initiated by the CTRL+DOWNARROW (^Down) hotkey combination is much simpler because the only check needed is whether the next branch is a parent or not:

```
If TV_GetNext(ThisOne) != 0
```

Otherwise, the new branch is added after the next branch:

```
^Down::
 ThisOne := TV_GetSelection()
 If TV_GetNext(ThisOne) != 0
  {
    TV_GetText(MoveName,ThisOne)
     EditText := % %Thisone%text
     NewAdd := TV_Add(MoveName, TV_GetParent(ThisOne), TV_GetNext(ThisOne))
     %NewAdd%text := EditText
     TV_Delete(ThisOne)
     TV_Modify(NewAdd, "Select")
  }
Return
```

Once both hotkey combinations are implemented CTRL+UP and CTRL+DOWN can be used to move the ingredients within a recipe. The current AutoHotkey script for RecipeTree (*RecipeTree 1.4.ahk*) can be found in the ZIP file *RecipeTree.zip* found at *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download Web site.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>
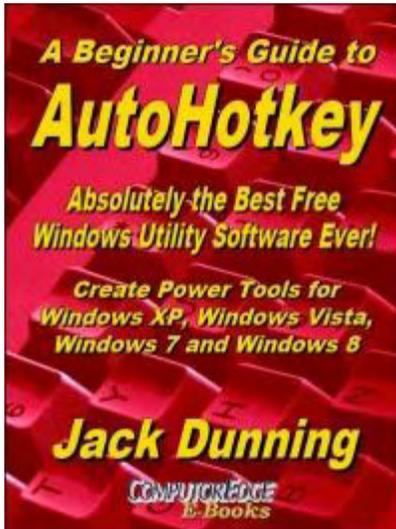
The new second edition with more chapters and an index to the AutoHotkey commands found in the book is available in e-book format from Amazon (and other formats—EPUB and PDF— at the ComputorEdgeBooks Web site linked below). Jack's *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8* offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey.

Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while working on the Web. AutoHotkey has a universality not found in any other Windows utility—free or paid.

Based upon the series of articles in *ComputorEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of windows, making any window always-on-top, copying and moving files, and much more. Each chapter builds on the previous chapters.
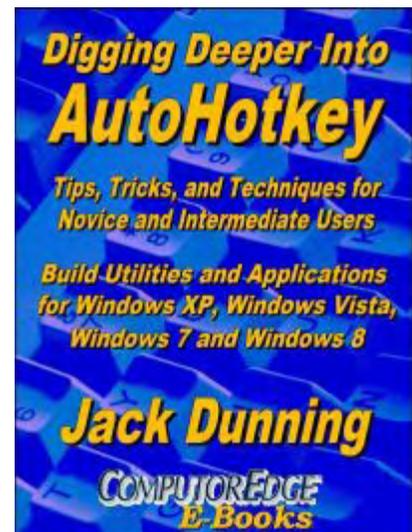
For an EPUB (iPad, NOOK, etc.) version of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!

For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!

*　　　　　　　　*　　　　　　　　*

Jack's latest AutoHotkey book which is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputorEdge* is now available at Amazon for Kindle hardware (or free software) users. Since the columns were not all written in a linear fashion, the book has been reorganized and broken up into parts by topic. The book is not for the complete beginner since it builds on the information in *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey*. However, if a person is reasonably computer literate, they could go directly to this book for ideas and techniques without the first book.

For an EPUB (iPad, NOOK, etc.) version of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here!

For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here!

Jack is the publisher of ComputorEdge Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called The Byte Buyer. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

[Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers](#).

Jack's [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8](#) and [Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey](#).

Our second compilation of stupid *ComputorEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! [That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputorEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"](#)

Special Free Offer at ComputorEdge E-Books! [Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Get Started!](#).

[Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8 (Seventh Edition)](#)!

[Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle](#),
[Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7](#),
[Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7](#),
and [That Does Not Compute!](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"The Future is iOS" by Wally Wang

The Future is iOS; The Power of Digital; Virtual Operating Systems with Parallels; The Five Worst CEOs of 2013; A 3D Printer for Food; Previewing Multiple Files.

Two of the most persistent rumors surrounding Apple involve a smart watch (iWatch) and a TV set (AppleTV). Guess which operating system both rumored devices will likely use? Chances are extremely high that it won't be OS X, which is designed more for desktop and laptop computers than mobile devices.

While everyone waits for Apple to enter the smart watch or smart TV markets that Samsung and Google have already tried to tackle first, many people keep overlooking Apple's efforts to put iOS into cars.

US patent filing No. 8,482,535 shows that Apple has developed the concept for a touchscreen to replace all the dials and buttons on your dashboard. The combination touch and voice-activated interface would control everything in the car from music to heating. To see a short demo of iOS in the car, watch this YouTube video.
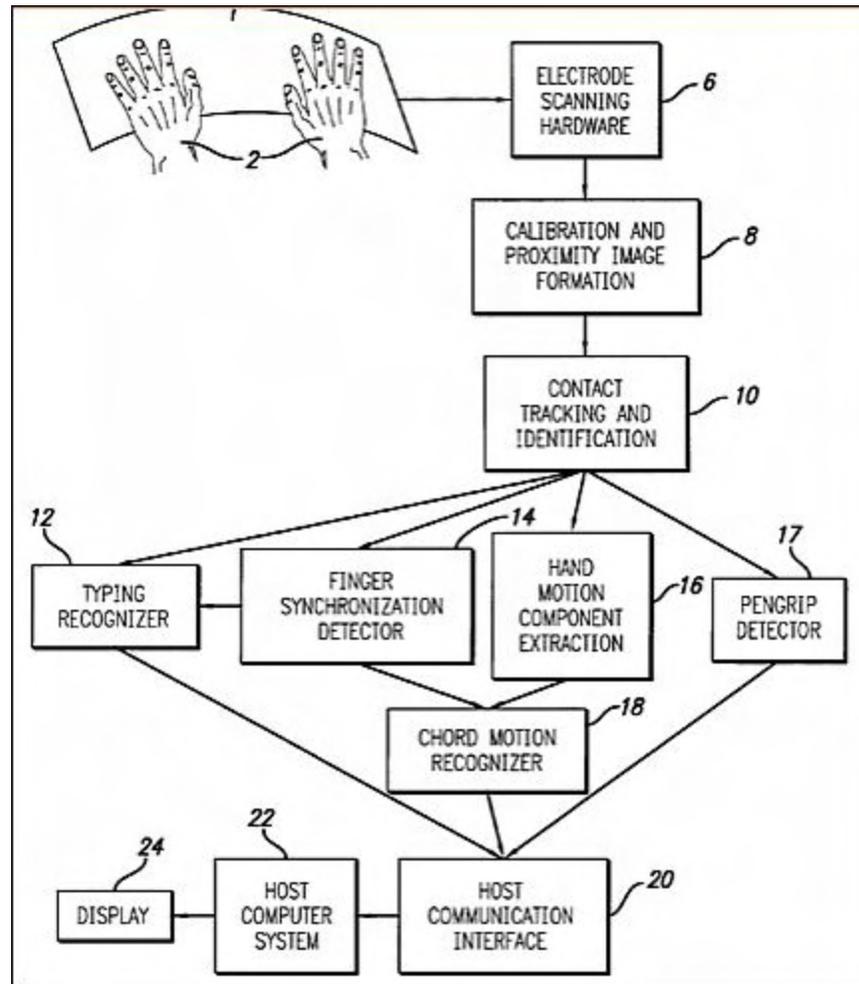
Figure 1. Apple's patent for a touchscreen interface in a car.

When you look at Apple's long-term plan to integrate iOS inside of cars, you can better understand why Apple created their own mapping app. It may have stemmed partly from relying less on Google but also because Apple could then customize their mapping app for iOS in the car. When you rely less on third-parties to make your product worth using, you'll simply have more control over your own destiny.

By 2014, several auto manufacturers including Honda, Chrysler, Nissan, Toyota, and General Motors, plan to incorporate iOS for certain car models. As iOS spreads from smartphones (iPhone) to tablets (iPad) to smart watches (iWatch) and TV sets (Apple TV) and now cars (iOS in the car), which operating system do you think will likely dominate in the future? Chances are good it won't be Palm OS, Blackberry OS, or Windows 8.1/RT with a physical keyboard attached to make it useful.

If you're a programmer, focus on iOS for the greatest opportunities in the future. Of course to create iOS apps, you'll need to use a Macintosh, which means OS X should steadily grow as developers have to get a Macintosh to write iOS apps.

As a consumer, most people probably won't care if they have iOS running in their car or not,

just as long as it gives them benefits they couldn't get without iOS in the car. By spreading iOS to cars, smart watches, and TV sets, Apple is making iOS the dominant operating system on all types of mobile devices.

Since mobile computing is going to dominate the computing market, anyone who makes money from computers should focus on iOS and mobile computing in general. For developers, iOS represents the greatest opportunities since Windows became the dominant operating system for PCs in the 90s. Any developer who refuses to learn iOS will likely became as obsolete as those stubborn programmers who refused to switch from MS-DOS to Windows because they thought that graphical user interfaces weren't as efficient as the command-line interface of MS-DOS.

If you find it hard to believe that anyone would think that the command-line interface of MS-DOS was far superior to the graphical interface of Windows, you probably weren't using computers during the transition from MS-DOS to Windows. That's when many MS-DOS supporters claimed that graphical user interfaces like Windows were "toys" and hampered getting "real" work done on a computer.

Fortunately, people today would never criticize any new technology as a "toy" incapable of doing "real" work. That's because everyone examines technology rationally for what it can do for them rather than clinging to what they're most familiar with and claiming that because they're familiar with it, then it must be superior to anything new. It's a good thing nobody still clings to ancient technology as superior or else they'd miss out completely on the shift to mobile computer operating systems.

The Power of Digital

Recording artist Beyonce recently released her [latest album](#) on iTunes. Besides not promoting the album ahead of time, Beyonce also made the decision not to allow the sale of individual tracks initially so early buyers had to buy the whole album. If buyers can wait, they'll be able to buy individual tracks later along with a CD version in the stores.

Despite the sudden appearance of this album, Beyonce wound up selling over 80,000 copies in three hours. By releasing the album exclusively on iTunes initially, Beyonce wound up creating more publicity than if she had promoted her album the traditional way through early releases of singles along with promotional appearances on TV.

By distributing her album digitally through iTunes, Beyonce likely gets a larger percentage of the profits than she would through sales of CDs in places like Walmart. Plus she could surprise the public with the sudden appearance of her new album without trying to keep shipments of physical CDs hidden from the public.

If distributing digitally can prove so lucrative by reaching the public faster than physical

distribution of CDs could ever do, can anyone guess how books and music might be distributed in the future? Release a new book or album as a digital file and you can instantly flood the market. Release a book or album as a physical item and customers have to wait until the product reaches the stores.

Digital distribution is faster and eliminates the middlemen of distributors, thereby retaining more profits for the artist. Is it any wonder that places like Wherehouse Records and Borders Books and Music went out of business when they can't compete against digital distribution? In the future, expect more books and music to appear digitally until buying a physical item will seem as rare as paying for a repairman to fix a TV set.

Virtual Operating Systems with Parallels

If you're thinking of using a Macintosh, chances are good you're a Windows PC user. In the old days, people claimed that switching to the Macintosh would be difficult because you'd have to learn a new user interface. Fortunately, Microsoft eliminated that argument by making Windows 8 so different (and difficult) from Windows XP/7 that switching from a Windows XP/7 PC to a Macintosh is now easier than switching from a Windows XP/7 PC to Windows 8.

Perhaps the best way to switch from a Windows PC to a Macintosh is to turn your current Windows PC into a virtual machine. That basically encapsulates your entire Windows PC as a single file so you can run your Windows and OS X programs simultaneously on a Macintosh.

If you ran Windows on a regular PC and something fouled up, you'd have to exhaustively search for the problem to fix it. If you run Windows as a virtual machine, just back up your virtual machine file periodically. Now if your virtual machine fouls up for whatever reason, delete that file and use your backup file instead. Within seconds, you can be back running Windows again with no frustration or loss of time. For that reason alone, running Windows as a virtual machine can be a tremendous time saver.
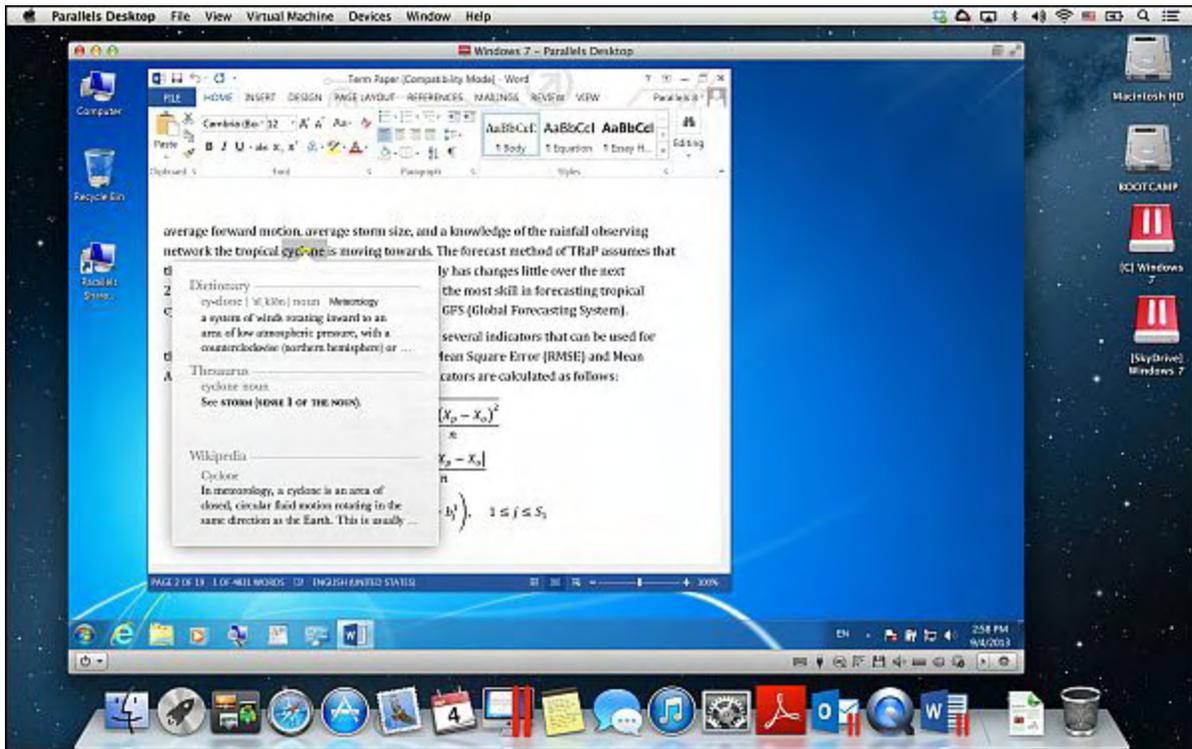
Figure 2. A virtual machine like Parallels lets you run Windows on a Macintosh.

There are three virtual machine options available. The first is a free, open source version called VirtualBox. VirtualBox requires a bit more knowledge to use, but since it's free, you can't go wrong learning about virtual machine programs than by trying VirtualBox.

A second solution is VMWare's Fusion. While Fusion isn't free like VirtualBox, it's much easier to use. Fusion's main competitor is Parallels. For the longest time, I relied on Fusion to run Windows XP on my Macintosh. Then with Parallels 7, I found myself relying on Fusion less and less. Now with Parallels 9, I simply deleted Fusion altogether and rely exclusively on Parallels.

Both Fusion and Parallels offer nearly identical features, but for my purposes, I find that Parallels 9 is slightly faster and easier to use. With both Fusion and Parallels, you can open the Windows desktop in a separate window on OS X. This essentially lets you use Windows exactly as if you were running it on a separate PC.

If you turn Windows 8 into a virtual machine, Parallels adds back in the traditional Start menu so you don't have to rely on third-party programs like Classic Shell to get rid of the awkward Windows 8 tile interface. Parallels also lets you run Windows 8 apps in separate windows instead of full screen. For that reason alone, Windows 8 users can make Windows 8 more usable just by running Windows 8 as a virtual machine within Parallels.

Figure 3. Parallels can make Windows 8 usable again with a familiar Start menu.

While some people might like running the complete Windows desktop in a separate OS X window, chances are good you'll only need to run an occasional Windows program once you start relying on OS X programs. That's when you can hide the Windows desktop and just have Parallels load your Windows programs directly as if they were OS X programs. Just put a Windows program icon on the OS X Dock and when you click on the icon, your Windows program pops up in its own OS X window so you can run Windows and OS X programs side by side.
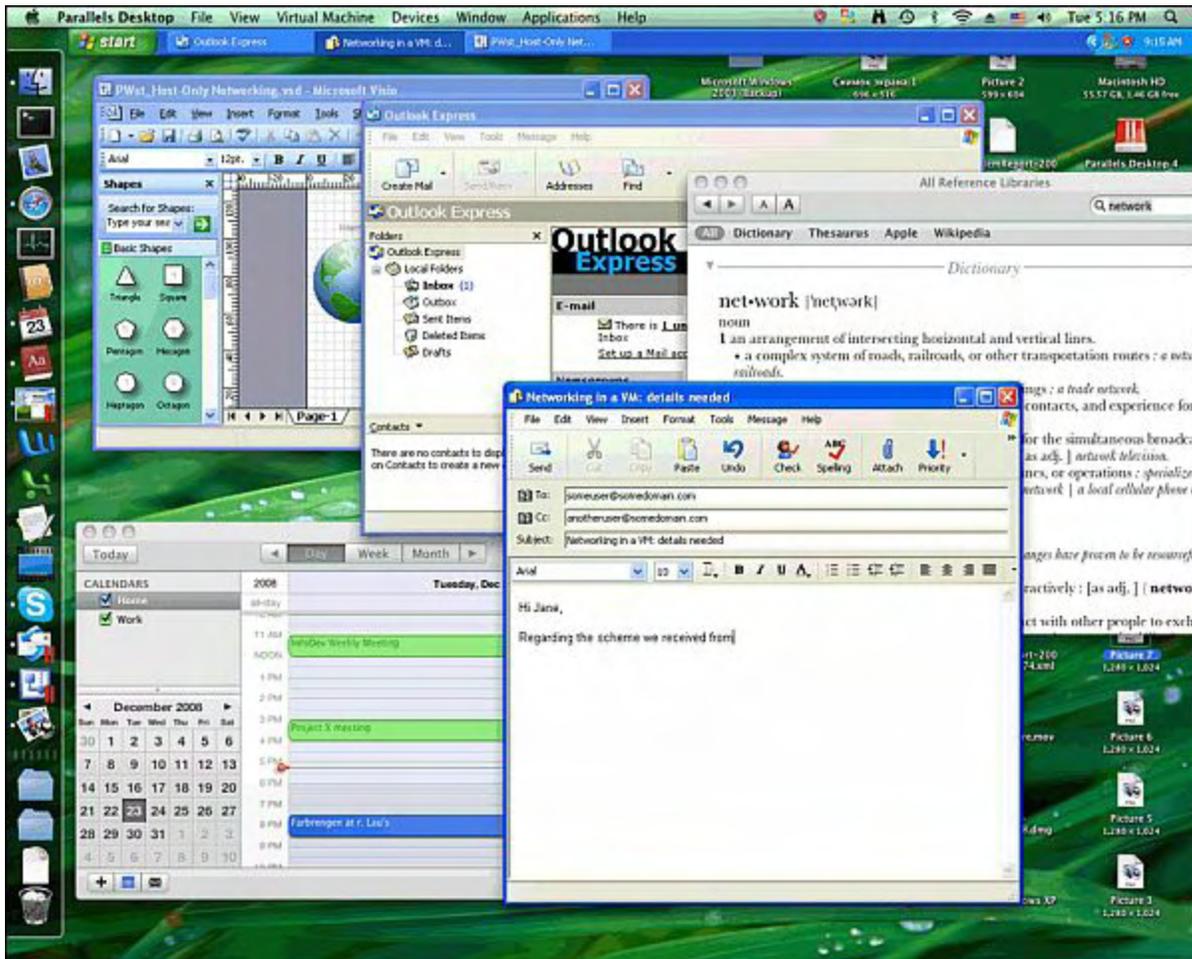
Figure 4. Parallels lets you run Windows programs in their own OS X windows.

Perhaps the greatest feature of Parallels is its ability to let you run both Windows and OS X programs remotely through an iPad. For all those people who claim that an iPad is useless without Microsoft Office, just install Windows as a virtual machine on your Macintosh with a copy of Microsoft Office.

Now from your iPad with a Wi-Fi connection, you can remotely access your Macintosh and run Microsoft Office (or any Windows or OS X program) through your iPad, even controlling any program though the touchscreen interface of the iPad.

Figure 5. Parallels lets you run any Windows or OS X program remotely from an iPad.

Even though programs like Windows XP or Outlook were never designed for touch gestures, Parallels still lets you control them through the iPad using the touchscreen. If you still think you need a physical keyboard to use programs like Microsoft Office, Parallels proves that you don't. Watch this YouTube video and you can see how you can even select and copy text from Microsoft Word and paste it into the iPad's Notes app.

Running Windows as a virtual machine offers numerous advantages such as the ease of recovering from a disaster (just replace your virtual machine file with a backup), making Windows 8 easier to use, and letting you remotely access your favorite Windows/OS X programs through an iPad. Parallels 9 is simply the most feature-packed virtual machine solution on the market that's far easier to use than the free VirtualBox program.

If you're curious about virtual machines, try VirtualBox, but don't let that experience make you think all virtual machine programs are just as cumbersome to use. If you want the most versatile virtual machine program available, you really want to look at Parallels 9.

The Five Worst CEOs of 2013

The BBC created a list of the five worst CEOs and three of them come from the technology field. In the number five position is Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO, who completely missed the mobile computer revolution and kept the company dependent on Windows and Microsoft Office, both of which are losing their grip on the computer market.

In the number three position is Thorsten Heins, who took over Blackberry and concluded that the company was doing just fine and didn't need to change anything at all. Needless to say, Blackberry continued to sink under his 22-month tenure and will likely disappear for good from the smartphone market.

In the number two position is Ron Johnson, who helped create the Apple Stores. When Ron took over as CEO of JC Penney, he tried to turn JC Penney into Apple, which made as much sense as former Pepsi CEO John Sculley trying to turn Apple into a soft drink company. Needless to say, Ron Johnson helped sink JC Penney even further with his decisions that ignored JC Penney's customers.

The big lesson from all of these horrible CEOs is why do companies continue to pay them millions before seeing the results they can produce? Perhaps companies should pay CEOs on commission so they only earn a percentage of the company's profits. Given the choice between earning millions for either doing nothing or wrecking a company, or being forced to earn money only if they can produce results, you can see which choice CEOs will make to the detriment of the companies they run.

Companies could save millions by simply forcing CEOs to make a company profitable before they dish out millions in compensation. Any CEO unwilling to work first before getting paid probably isn't worth hiring in the first place.

When Steve Jobs took over Apple as the official CEO, his annual salary was $1, but he made his fortune by leading the company into the future. If other CEOs got paid $1, they would still be grossly overpaid for their efforts, which makes you wonder how so many companies can be so careless in paying millions for CEOs who ruin companies so quickly.

If Walmart lets you return a defective blender to get your money back, how come shareholders can't request a refund from the salaries they paid to incompetent CEOs and executives? If that could happen, it would force CEOs to be more diligent in actually working for the company's benefit and not just for their own benefit, which explains why that will never happen.

A 3D Printer for Food

By the middle of 2014, you should be able to buy [Foodini](#), a $1,300 3D printer that specializes in making food. Just pour in fresh ingredients like meat or vegetables and the Foodini turns it into food that you can either eat as-is or cook afterwards.

Figure 6. The Foodini 3D printer can "print" a meal from fresh ingredients.

While the idea of using a 3D printer to make food may sound weird, it just shows you how quickly 3D printing technology has progressed. NASA already plans to use 3D printers to prepare meals for astronauts in space while using other 3D printers to make tools and spare parts that astronauts might need to repair their space craft.

Foodini may seem like an odd kitchen appliance, but microwave ovens used to be odd appliances in most kitchens until practically every kitchen now has one. Within a few years, expect 3D printers to be standard in every kitchen and people will suddenly wonder how anyone got along without a 3D printer just like people wonder how anyone could cook without a microwave oven.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

If you see a file and can't remember what it contains, you could waste time opening that file, looking at it, then shutting down the program that opened it. Of course, that's a waste of time, so it's easier just to click on a file in the Finder window and press the space bar to see a preview of the file's contents.
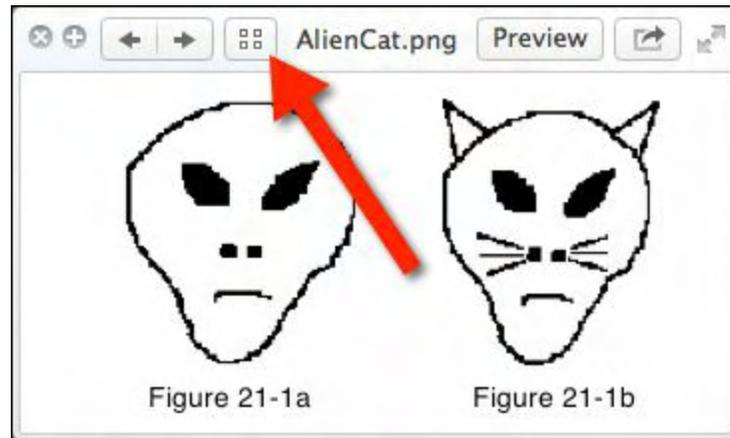
Figure 7. The preview feature lets you view the contents of a file.

However, if you're using OS X Mavericks 10.9, you can now select multiple files by holding down the Command key as you click on each file you want to view. Press the space bar and a window appears, displaying the first file you selected. Click the grid icon and now you can view all of your selected files at once in a grid.
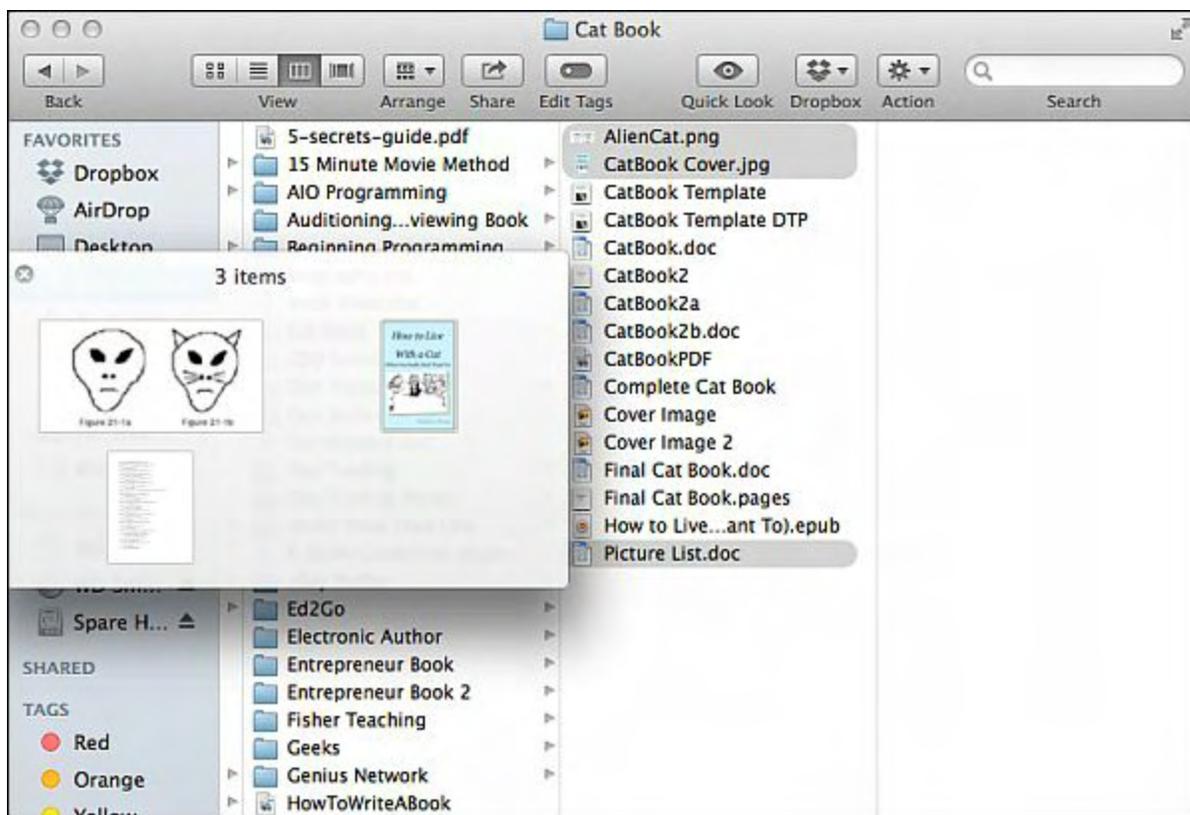

Figure 8. Previewing multiple files in a grid.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

Microsoft Office 2013 For Dummies

Beginning Programming for Dummies

Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies

Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison

Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher

How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To)

The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders

Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners

Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us)

The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou

The 15-Minute Movie Method

Erotophobia (A novel)

Math for the Zombie Apocalypse

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method," finding interesting news stories about cats at his site "Cat Daily News," giving advice to authors who want to self-publish e-books at his site "The Electronic Author," and providing the type of advice he wishes someone would have told him when he was much younger at his personal Web site. Wally can be reached at *wally@computoredge.com*.

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

"The latest in tech news and hot product reviews." by Charles Carr

Smartphone Spirituality for Advent and Christmas Observance; Holiday (and Everyday) Tips for Photographing Tots; Samsung Galaxy Gear Wearable Device.

Smartphone Spirituality for Advent and Christmas Observance

[Holy Cross Ministries](#) writes in with info about a free apps for anyone who observes Advent and Christmas:

Advent and Christmas? Yes, there is an app for that! For the second year in a row, Family Rosary is helping smartphone users focus on the true meaning of the season with a free mobile app specifically designed to highlight the spiritual aspect of the holiday with a free mobile app for smartphone users to help them stay focused on the true meaning of the season.

The Advent and Christmas App uses modern technology to bring Scripture, spiritual messages and music to those who wish to embrace the religious significance of the holidays.

Family Rosary created the Advent and Christmas mobile app to enable people to keep Christ in Christmas. Featuring meditative music with scripture and reflections, this app—for iPhones, iPads, Androids and all other Smartphones—uses technology to help Christians stay focused on the true meaning of holiday. With Advent's start on Sunday, Dec. 1, the mobile app features a new prayer each day to keep the emphasis right where it needs to be.

A promotional video can be found at www.FamilyRosary.org or on YouTube.

This is the third mobile app offered by Family Rosary. The first—Pray the Rosary—has already topped 50,000 in downloads at iTunes.

The Advent and Christmas App is free and can be downloaded at www.FamilyRosary.org, as well as on iTunes and Google Play.
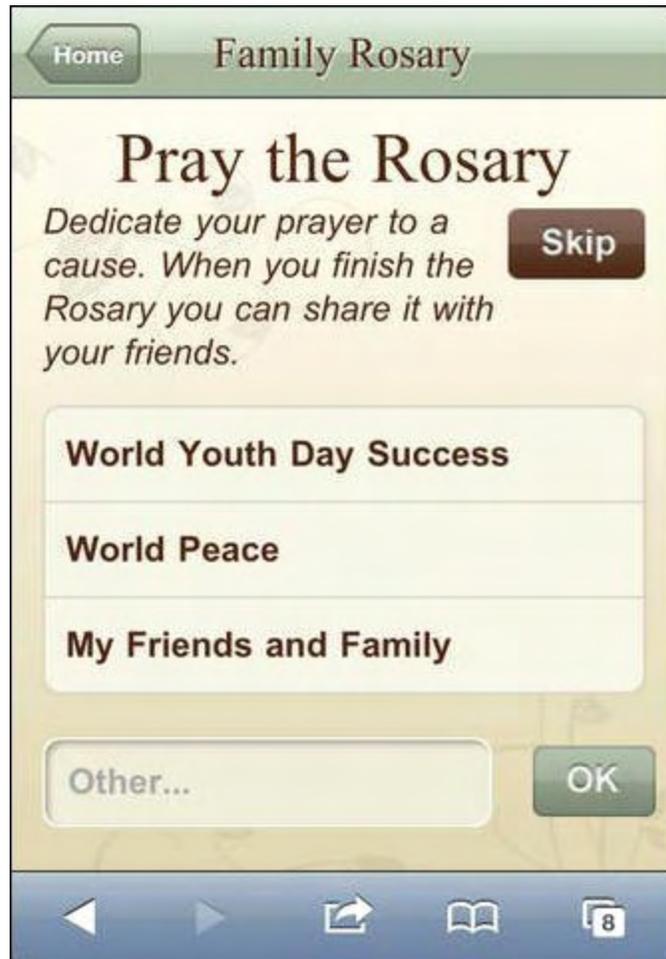
Family Rosary, which celebrates more than 70 years of serving families, is a member ministry Holy Cross Family Ministries, which was founded by Servant of God Patrick Peyton in 1942. A candidate for sainthood, Father Peyton was one of the most influential American Catholic priests of the 20th century. Known as the "Rosary Priest," he encouraged millions of people to pray the Rosary daily. Father Peyton was a media pioneer who used radio, television and film to communicate his message of family unity by praying the Rosary around the world.

Holiday (and Everyday) Tips for Photographing Tots

W.C Fields famously said: "Never work with children or animals." The folks at Anthropics Technology sent in the following tips to help with half of that group.

1. Scheduling

Many children under the age of four still require afternoon naps. Discuss the child's sleep habits with their parents in order to book the optimal time slot. If possible try not to keep children waiting too long before starting the shoot. A child who is already restless before you

begin is much more likely to be a handful later. Be ready to stop, or at least take a break, if the child becomes tired and restless.

2. Plan Your Shots (but don't rule out the unexpected)

Children respond best to straightforward, confident instructions. This is especially true of children who are nervous or unruly in front of a camera. Have a plan for the shots you want to achieve. Be ready to say "Look out of the window" "Look this way" "Now let's sit on the rug." Not only will the child be more confident in responding to you, but you'll be able to get through the shoot in a timely fashion. However, have your camera ready at all times. Some of the best shots of the day might be caught when traveling between locations or stopping for a juice break.

3. Forget the Cheese

"Say Cheese!" is the cry of the school portrait photographer. However, a forced grin is easy to spot, so be ready to play the clown to elicit a smile. For very young children, a puppet held behind the camera will have the added benefit of drawing their eyes to a desired spot. For the 4 to 5's a few choices from a My First Joke Book can get the giggles going. As with posing, many of your most beautiful shots will come when the child isn't smiling. Be ready to capture these too.

4. Get down to their level or way up high

If you can, get down to or even below the child's natural eye line. Toddlers see the world from a different angle to adults, try to capture some of these differences in perspective in your images. Alternatively, get way up high. Use blankets, toys or props to give color and texture to the floor.

5. Props & Costumes

As well as being super cute, costumes can turn a shoot into a relaxed playtime. Props such as a small toy will keep babies and run-around toddlers occupied. For older children, consider experimenting with food as a prop. A tub of flour makes for great messy play, just be sure these are your last shots of the day. If you're not comfortable making a mess, Playdough is a good substitute.

6. Think Fast

Unlike adult models, your child subject is unlikely to sit still. Even at rest or when concentrating, a toddler is likely to move through positions and facial expressions quickly and won't be able to replicate them if asked. If possible, shoot as though you were taking action shots, even if the scene is relatively static. A high shutter speed will freeze the action. Your camera should also have a continuous shooting or "burst" mode that will allow you to take several shots in a row. If you are using your camera's autofocus, consider switching to continuous autofocus (AF-C for Nikon, AI Servo AF for Canon). In this mode, your camera will track a moving object and keep them in focus.

7. Catch the Light

Catchlights look beautiful in any portrait but are particularly lovely in children's portraits. Pose the child so that the light source is reflected in their eyes. As you'll likely be using the eyes as your focal point anyway, check for these before you take the shot. If your lighting setup doesn't give you the catchlights you want, you can add these in Portrait Professional by opening the Eye Controls and selecting an option from the Add Reflection menu.

8. Take More Than You Need

More than any other group, children are likely to blink, fidget or turn around just as you've framed the perfect shot. Make sure you have plenty of spare batteries and memory cards to capture twice as many images as you think you'll need. With Portrait Professional Studio or Studio 64, you can import images with Batch Mode, allowing you to progress quickly through your images. Set up a custom preset based on your first image to edit subsequent images in a single click.

Anthropics Technology is offering Christmas gift tags with your own photo for perfect personalized presents. Check it out at www.portraitprofessional.com.

Samsung Galaxy Gear Wearable Device

Product: Galaxy Gear
Manufacturer: Samsung
Web site: www.samsung.com
Price: $299

Samsung says the aim of their new Galaxy Gear wearable device (they don't refer to it as a smartwatch) is to let users "live life in the moment while staying connected." The Gear syncs up with a Galaxy Note 3, Galaxy S 4, Galaxy S 3, or other smartphone (depending on model and/or carrier). Use the touchscreen to display and control previews of incoming calls, messages, alerts, texts, e-mails, and the like while looking pretty darn snazzy on your wrist in the bargain.

It's actually pretty cool technology, especially for someone who dislikes the hassle of pulling out their smartphone every couple of minutes to check the screen. (I read the other day that the average smartphone user checks his or her device, on average, about 100 times an hour.) And you've still got your full-powered smartphone a foot away should you decide to respond —or ignore them (so you can listen to the rest of the church sermon).

The Gear also has a small built-in speaker so you can actually conduct calls without even having to pull out your phone. Samsung cites the example of a user leaving the grocery store, whose hands are full with shopping bags, being able to still make a call by speaking into the Galaxy Gear without touching the screen. Owners can also use S Voice to draft messages, create new calendar entries, set alarms, and even check the weather right on the device itself.

Another feature, called the Memographer, lets you enlist the Gear's 1.9 megapixel camera to take pics and record video to create records of life events to keep and to share. There's even a quick-record feature (Voice Memo) that allows you to capture important thoughts (e.g., "I should really stop messing with this thing in church!") and even conversations that can be saved into texts for easy recall later.

Worried about losing track of the mothership? Auto Lock automatically secures the companion smartphone any time the Gear gets more than 1.5 meters away and then unlocks it again when the devices are near again. Find My Device helps you do just that with beeping, illumination, and vibration.

The Gear can even control music played from their companion device.

Using the Gear's Pedometer you can keep track of key aspects of your workout including calories burned, number of steps taken, and the amount of distance you've covered.

If all that weren't enough, the Galaxy Gear is also—you're not going to believe this—*a watch*; one that comes with 10 face "looks" so that users can create a truly personal experience. More faces can be downloaded.

The Gear is also pretty sharp-looking, elegant even. Wear it with a bracelet or two and you're going to get some attention. I can testify from my own experiences that it's guaranteed to turn heads and elicit lots of questions wherever you go.

The [Samsung Galaxy Gear](#) is definitely something you should consider, particularly if you're a first adopter-type. Make sure, of course, you already own or are willing to buy, a Galaxy Note 3 or other compatible smartphone that can pair with the Gear.

It's exciting to think where this technology will be in a couple years' time.

⊕⊕⊕ ⟨

[Samsung Galaxy Gear](#) Product Specifications (from Samsung)

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800 MHz processor

1.63 inch (41.4mm) Super AMOLED (320 x 320)

1.9 Megapixel BSI Sensor, Auto Focus Camera / Sound & Shot

2 Microphones (Noise Cancellation), 1 Speaker

BluetoothR v 4.0 + BLE sensor

Accelerometer

Gyroscope

4GB Internal memory + 512 MB (RAM)

36.8 x 56.6 x 11.1 mm, 73.8g

Standard battery, 315mAh

Video codec: H.264
Format: MP4
HD(720p) Playback & Recording

Audio codec: AAC
Format : M4A

Featured Apps

Atooma is a contextually aware horizontal intelligence platform that makes your GALAXY Gear smarter.

Banjo gives you the power to see what's happening right now, anywhere in the world.

Evernote watch app makes it easy to remember things by quickly capturing images and memories and bringing important reminders right to GALAXY Gear.

Glympse allows people to easily share their location temporarily and in real-time, letting recipients see their movements on a dynamic map.

eBay app allows you to complete all your transactions on eBay with ease and in real-time.

Line is a global messaging service available in over 230 countries worldwide.

MyFitnessPal tracks your nutrition and exercise, empowering you to achieve your personal health and fitness goals.

Path is the personal network designed to bring you closer to your friends and family.

Pocket, the leading way to save web content to view later on any device, brings text-to-speech article playback to GALAXY Gear.

RunKeeper is the personal trainer in your pocket, helping you track your runs, set your goals, and stay motivated.

TripIt from Concur makes it easy to organize travel plans in one place.

Vivino Wine Scanner allows you to take a photo of any wine and get to know all about it instantly.

Samsung Apps

ChatON: mobile communication service

Smart Relay, S Voice, Memographer, Voice Memo

Auto Lock, Find My Device, Media Controller, Pedometer, Stopwatch, Timer

Safety assistance: In case of emergency, press a power button 3 times continuously, and then user's location information is transferred to the saved contacts with message.

Multiple award-winning author Charles Carr has written more than two thousand newspaper articles, magazine stories, and columns for many publications including the San Diego Union Tribune, The Californian, The North County Times, Parent Magazine, ComputerScene, and ComputorEdge Magazine where he has been an editor for more than two decades. He is also a television producer/director with shows both currently airing and in production on Cox Cable and elsewhere.

In the 1990s, Charles wrote 3DHouse, a complete inside-and-out virtual reality tour of his family's log home in Southern California. One of the first virtual reality programs ever created, 3DHouse enjoyed tens of thousands of shareware downloads on all major portals. He also sold the rights to Radio Shack and Egghead Software. 3DHouse has since been featured in many books and articles about VR.

Carr has also been commissioned to write and/or directed many of his own stage plays. Several years ago, Carr and others looking for ways to help organizations struggling in difficult economic times, founded Art Animates Life (*www.artanimateslife.org*).

To date, Art Animates Life, a CA incorporated, federal non-profit, has raised tens-of-thousands of dollars for San Diego area disaster relief, an arts non-profit and municipal gallery, a community outreach center, and several struggling community theaters.

Several years ago Carr was commissioned to adapt and direct the beloved Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol. The play, titled "Mr. Scrooge & Mr. Dickens," has sold out So Cal theaters for the past several years. Six shows will take place Dec. 2013 to benefit the San Marcos Historical Society.

Another original play, "All the Time in the World," has been performed many times and garnered broad acclaim from audiences and critics alike. Carr is working on a brand new adaptation of the classic Hitchcock thriller, "The Lady Vanished," to be performed spring 2014.

Carr has won many writing accolades, including San Diego Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Best Consumer Writing, and Best Arts and Entertainment. He has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

Carr is also a noted producer, director, and videographer. Several of his documentaries can currently be seen on So Cal's Cox Cable. Since its inception he has produced the Fallbrook International Film Festival's red carpet event and panel discussions.

Charles receives dozens of requests each year to appear on Southern California television and radio stations to talk about important tech events. He also speaks from time-to-time to high schools and organizations about his eclectic life in the arts.

Learn more at *www.charlescarr.com*.

Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

"or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution" by Matthew W. Beale

A Season in Consumerism; Analog Nostalgia; Wireless Speaker Mania; (RED); "Of music before ...";
Coltrane!; Sol's Vivaldi; The Hills are Alive... with The Desolation of Smaug; Happy Holidays!

"Of music before everything," said French poet Paul Verlaine, another simple and beautiful music-related expression, that joins a sea of such phrases haunting me in some way—particularly as I prepare a theoretically succinct last-minute gift guide—trying to figure out exactly what it means to me at any given moment.

A Season in Consumerism

Whether you have an aversion to Black Friday stampedes, how Cyber Monday/Week seems to give everyone at least a minor touch of OCD, or are simply too consumed with everything else going on in your life, I promised last Friday that I'd try to assist in the process so you can focus on the intangibles that matter most.

I also jokingly said, "for you, dear reader, I tear out a few hideous pages from my notebook of one of the damned (damned, and doomed to wander online looking for digital music-related bargains to report on, that is)—to liberally borrow/steal from Rimbaud's A Season In Hell." The reference would of course be indicative of my own feelings on the matter of shopping

obsessions, in a sense, but of course finding a gift that indicates you actually know something about the intended recipient, is the ideal. If that involves digital music, here are a few ideas that are generally inexpensive and accessible.

Analog Nostalgia

First, I feel that I need to apologize for the Makerbot Mixtape, an item included in last year's gift guide, something that looked so promising and fun that I opened the piece with a brief discussion about it.

"In case you've missed it, Makerbot—which has become a bit of a tech (and other) media darling—is a 3D printer that uses plastics to create prototypes (pilots) or working models for sale based on a design. The Mixtape, in evident homage to its namesake, is shaped like a cassette, but is in actuality a 2GB MP3 player. Plug in via USB, and that's it. Simplicity can be wonderful (when you can actually find it)."

Eminently cool, right? The only problem is that the mixtape was sold out once my column was published (and has remained so ever since). D'OH. But, someone has graciously come in to fill the void.

"My Modern Mixtape (*mymodernmixtape.com*) began with a single thought, Why don't we make mixtapes anymore?! And that thought became an idea and the idea is now a reality."

Simple, indie (produced by university students), and, essentially, very cool (in fact, eminently so). A 2 GB flash drive housed in a holder that is of course shaped as—and functions as an homage to—the nearly extinct audio cassette, complete with a label. It's only $16.95, and fulfills the promise/tease of the Makerbot Mixtape, endearingly straddling both our analog memories, and everyday digital technology.

As it turns out, other enterprising individuals are introducing similar products. Milktape, for instance, is an MP3 player, again shaped like a cassette, with flip-out USB and "28 MB (holds 15 songs average) because everything should be handpicked" ($15 from *milktape.com*).

Wireless Speaker Mania

Now, the speakers. As with last year, I find myself drawn to those that are more compact, like the X-Mini, which has introduced its KAI XAM11-B Bluetooth Portable Capsule, in line with a general trend toward wireless—and unlike many trends, that's a positive development. As

with its wired predecessor, users are of course encouraged to "Buddy jack as many as you like for more fun."

Cambridge Soundworks has a series of speakers, including the portable and wireless OontZ series. The OontZ Angle, for instance, is 5.31 x 2.67 inches, weighs 9.1 ounces, fits in your hand, has a rechargeable 12-hour battery, and is more impressive than it looks, nicely handling the range of classical, jazz, and pop I threw at it. Coming in a pleasant range of colors, these are on sale through Amazon for $39.99 "for a limited time" ($69.99 regular price). No wireless? "No difficulty," as my Dad prefers to say. There is an "included 3.5mm audio cable to connect your device"—smart phone, laptop, whatever (t).

Creative Labs, parent company of Cambridge, has a nice range of speakers itself. I tested the Creative Airwave Portable Wireless Bluetooth Speaker with NFC (Near Field Communication) —in bright green (there's a choice of 4 colors). I'm sure we're all familiar, perhaps to different degrees, with the limitations of smartphone speakers, and how they can either infuriatingly kill the best jams, or mercifully dim some of the music that somehow finds its way onto the charts.

This quirky looking speaker solves that problem in a snap —with a tap. "Simply tap your NFC-enabled smart device on the speaker, and they're paired," according to Creative. Unfortunately, Apple has famously resisted incorporating this into the iPhone. But for most other smartphone users, this should be a ridiculously fast and easy way to handle such a thing.

Pairing the iPhone actually turned out to be rather easy once I got over the "no NFC" frustration, and just used Bluetooth. My first impression of using it was that audiophiles (and the audiophile in me) need to chill out. This is obviously designed for fun. It was late when I had the time to work with the Creative Airwave, so I took it to the garage, and blasted whatever was already on the iPhone: "people are crazy and times are strange ..." Ok. It's a bit larger than I imagined for some reason, and I expected more from the upper volume limits, but it's probably everything that I should expect for a device that costs approximately $50. I must admit, that in using it, I thought of the OontZ Angle because of its smaller, more compact size, but they're both decent little blocks of music tech.

Incidentally, I need to at least mention Sony's Portable Bluetooth Speaker (model SRS-BTM8). It has more of a real speaker feel to it, but features a handle on top for the convenience of carrying it to the beach, or almost anywhere, really. Just please don't stand

outside the house of your ex, holding this over your head playing "Red Rain" on a maddening loop. Beyond a cliché, it's just creepy and stalker-like behavior. ;)

(RED)

The (RED) organization remains quite active in their fight against AIDS. You can still offer support by way of purchasing their products, and music has always been a big part of things. Years back, they had a sort of multimedia electronic publication available by subscription. That's no longer offered, but there are MP3 albums released around the holidays each year with proceeds going to the organization's efforts.

For 2013, there's Dance (RED) Saves Lives 2, or perhaps The Dallas Buyers Club soundtrack. Also, The Killers continue their tradition of annually releasing a song just for (RED)—this year, it's Christmas in L.A. Beyond that, there's a range of red-colored products, the purchase of which will provide support, ranging from the Apple iPod shuffle, nano, and touch, along with "special edition" Beats by Dre headphones, and more. Stop by *red.org/* for more information, or to order any of the above items.

Apple (PRODUCT)RED iPod shuffle

"Of music before ..."

Before "everything," as I recall. Up until now, that's meant a relatively short list of the gadgetry used to enjoy perhaps some Bach, or Sonic Youth. But it's time, finally, to focus entirely on the music.

Coltrane!
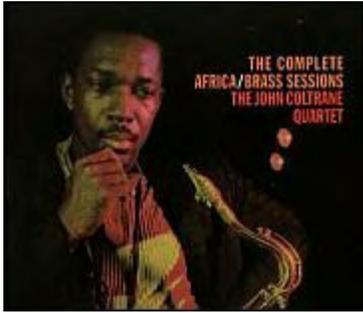
John Coltrane—who's responsible for [The Complete Africa Brass Sessions](#), my favorite album of any time, genre, etc.—is constantly conferred new life, even though he passed away almost a half century ago.

In 2007, The Pulitzer Prize Board awarded a posthumous Special Citation to Coltrane, commenting that "his work has weight, an artistic quest and searching nature." They continued: "Coltrane infused the existing tradition with innovation and radical approaches. The surface of his music is dynamic and palpable, the underlying structure is suffused with spirituality and provocative political content."

It comes as little surprise, then, that the audience for Coltrane's music has continued to grow. Even though there are dubious "best of" recordings that have popped up continuously over the years, as well as releases with seemingly less respect for the integrity of the original recordings than they deserve, some wonderful and worthy reissues have been made available, too.

Africa, as previously mentioned—recorded for Impulse, a label that eventually came to be known as "the house that Trane built"—A Love Supreme, and Giant Steps, are some wonderful examples of recent rereleases.

This year, there have been a couple more Coltrane re-releases, including [Afro Blue Impressions](#) (Remastered & Expanded). "This new two-disc reissue," said Concord Jazz, arrived "just a few weeks ahead of the 50th anniversary of the original concerts." The album consists of music recorded live in Berlin and Stockholm from fall, 1963.

"When you compare and contrast the performance of a composition that was released on the original album to a different performance of the same composition from among the bonus tracks," said Afro Blue Impressions reissue producer Nick Phillips. "It perfectly illustrates just how restlessly creative Coltrane and his band were. Each song was a springboard for unpredictable improvisation and boundless creativity."

Also earlier in 2013, The [Complete Sun Ship Session](#) was made available, "which includes newly discovered and previously unissued alternate takes from one of the final studio sessions by the John Coltrane Quartet," according to Mosaic Records.

"This Complete Sun Ship Session edition is much more: sourced from newly discovered original reels, the set includes the album's five original compositions, unedited, in sequence of recording, with all of the takes as they evolved, as well as the surrounding conversations," said David Wild, in the liner notes. "More than just a sampling of a few alternate takes, The Complete Sun Ship Session offers a rare opportunity to eavesdrop on an iconic master at work," added Wild.

I've always enjoyed the relatively (or certainly more) complete versions of these great albums, that include false starts and, more importantly, alternate versions, something quite valuable and very important to the art of jazz. Okay. To state the obvious, these new releases would be fantastic gifts for those already acquainted with Coltrane, although a live performance can always serve as a great entry point, allowing someone to really discover an artist. But any of the other Coltrane albums mentioned would be nice presents for the jazz/music lover in your life.

Sol's Vivaldi

Sol Gabetta is a classical cellist who also made my guide/list last year. She has a new album consisting of recordings of Vivaldi's Cello Concertos, her third in fact. This time out, she works with her brother Andrés, a violinist, and Capella Gabetta, credited on the album, is an ensemble they formed together. Gorgeous music and a wonderful gift—you might be surprised by how many people would appreciate this. Ms. Gabetta, it must be said, is building a nice body of work that includes Elgar, Shostakovich, and a collaboration with pianist Hélène Grimaud.

Speaking of Ms. Grimaud, and straying from purely digital music for a moment, I received a blu-ray audio version ("high fidelity pure audio") of her album Credo, and even though I have a possibly limited external blu-ray drive, it was a nice test drive. It might have helped if I had the Credo CD or MP3 album in order to compare, but it had a clean, dynamic sound. A great gift for the audiophile on your list (there are relatively few titles serving as sort of showcases, really, for the format's potential, but you can also find The Velvet Underground & Nico, Baker's Holiday by Chet Baker, etc.)! Some of the discs come with mShuttle technology. "If your Blu-ray player is connected to your home network, you can use the browser application on your computer to access portable copies of the songs residing on the Pure Audio Blu-ray disc in your player," according to the pureaudio Web site (*www.pureaudio-bluray.com*).

Pianist Sanja Bizjak this year released Rachmaninov: Etudes Tableaux op 33 and op 39. I discovered her while researching the various piano versions of Le Sacre du Printemps. Ms. Bizjak—originally from Belgrade, but currently a Parisian—recorded Stravinsky's landmark piece "for four hands" with sister Lidija, and the two have performed this and other works—including La Valse for 2 pianos—together extensively. I'll discuss this further in a long overdue column hopefully in early 2014.

In the meantime, that reminds me of another amazing gift idea: Igor Stravinsky: Le Sacre Du Printemps 100th Anniversary box set. This is Sony's version, and they've managed to collect 10 excellent pieces, a nice multilingual booklet, keeping the price accessible (in physical and digital formats, it tends to range between

$20 and $30).

The Hills are Alive... with The Desolation of Smaug
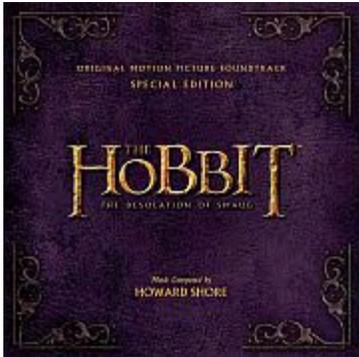
Despite what I undoubtedly said, soundtracks probably don't have an extremely limited audience, and why would they? Just look at the monstrous box office numbers the media are so in love with reporting. People adore movies, as they probably have since motion pictures were introduced and began enchanting us with their unique manner of visual storytelling, bringing together multiple artistic disciplines. So for that sister, cousin, uncle, best friend, ad infinitum, that has a movie they won't stop making references to, how can a soundtrack not be the perfect gift? Here are a few that have caught my attention for one reason or another.

"Smaug the Magnificent. Smaug the Stupendous. Smaug the Golden. Middle-earth's last great dragon ..." Peter Jackson is back, as you've probably heard, with holiday film launches based on the works of Tolkien. The second installation of the stretched out cinematic version of *The Hobbit* has been released, along with the soundtrack. The Deluxe version has 2 CDs worth of music, and a wonderful digital booklet. Everything we've come to expect from Howard Shore, in Middle Earth and elsewhere.

Clint Mansell was back this year with a strong soundtrack for Stoker, as was Max Richter, providing the perfect sonic accompaniment to Perfect Sense. Jonathan Snipes and William Hutson set just the right tone for the rather odd documentary Room 237, essentially about obsession and the film version of *The Shining*. That reminds me of *The X-Files* somehow.

Remember *The X-Files*? You certainly wouldn't be blamed if you forgot the last two seasons (and yes, Duchovny was right in his feeling that they should have ended with Season 7). Okay. Music From The X-Files: 20th Anniversary Celebration was released this past October, and is definitely a gift for anyone who really, really wanted to believe, and still does. It includes *The X-files* Suite, music from some great episodes, such as "The Ghosts Who Stole Christmas" (I actually watch this over the holidays every year), and "Dreamland", not to mention both films (I'd prefer not to—on the subject of mentally consigning things to oblivion, BTW, or eternal sunshine of the selective memory... what second film? ;). All I can say is that this soundtrack for me provided a range of nostalgic triggers and a lot of fun in the process, and so I imagine that the right soundtrack choice can do much the same for someone in your life that you're thinking of at this late hour.

Last but not least, *The Sound of Music*. Well, the 45th anniversary soundtrack for the film was released in 2010, but this year there was The Sound of Music Live on TV, and a studio
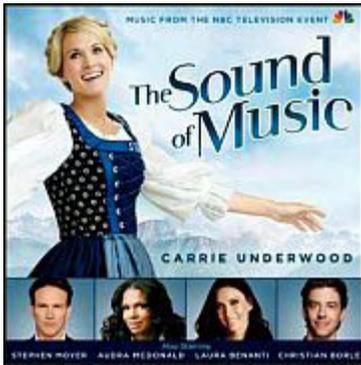
recorded album to go with it. Firstly, let me state the obvious: Carrie Underwood is not Julie Andrews. But there are Moms, for instance, who would still really enjoy this revisiting of a classic collection of music. Definitely worth keeping in mind.

Happy Holidays!

Back to Verlaine's quote, sure, one could use it cynically in terms of driving the sale of gadgets, and so forth, but it can also be a reference to what the music itself means, something that can be both so profoundly personal, and an experience shared. That's why music, or the means to play it, can actually be such a wonderful gift.

As I said last year, for the season, whatever you celebrate, and however you choose to do so, I hope that you're able to enjoy the music and other intangibles that bring people together, everything that has real meaning in your life. Prost.

My first published work focused on music, and related obsessions pushed me to become a DJ, Producer, and Music Director in college radio. With this column, I feel as though I'm sort of returning to something I love (although I've never left, really). I've been tracking the evolution of online music distribution since the days of Napster, and obsessively follow music releases across a range of genres. One of my music players (on each of my devices) is going from the time I wake up until the end of the day, lulling me to sleep (or what little I actually grab). "Without music, life would be an error." ~ Fred, the mad German

Significantly, I'm returning to work after a prolonged personal leave, functioning in the capacity as a caregiver. Please feel free to contact me with story ideas or suggestions about digital music releases at withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hushmail.com.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"Converting AVG to Free Version," "Laptop Keyboard Replacement," "Upgrade to 8.1? No Way!" "Win 8.1 Upgrade Agreement"

Converting AVG to Free Version

[Regarding the December 6 Digital Dave column:]

As a long time enthusiast of the free AVG, I know that it is easy to confuse the trial and/or free version pop-ups and start the trial version.

But, it's easy to get back to the free version.

Got to Control Panel => Add/Remove Programs (or just Run => *appwiz.cpl*).

Click the AVG to uninstall. Follow along and at some point, you'll get an option to convert back to the free version. Select that and you're good to go!

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Laptop Keyboard Replacement

[Regarding the December 6 Digital Dave column:]

Also, replacement keyboards (usually used) are almost always available on eBay, and YouTube (Google+ sucks) has videos for those who like visual help, for most keyboards on laptops as well.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Upgrade to 8.1? No Way!

[Regarding the December 6 Digital Dave column:]

I disagree completely and am recommending to all friends and clients that they *not* go to 8.1

I *have* recommended to regular users to go with 8 instead of 7, but having had to work on some 8.1 machines, doing fix-it/maintenance/management, it's a horror. Many things behind the scenes are either gone, or hidden so well they take a *lot* of work to find. I hate the new search, for example, it doesn't find things like in 8.

If you want a start button, use one of the many programs that bring it back, they work great.

With a few things to learn, Windows 8 isn't all that much harder to use than 7, and, especially for laptops, the power saving features make it better than 7.

Things to learn, if I can remember 'em all.

1. Move the Desktop "app" to the beginning of the Modern screen. Then, once system boots, just hit enter and you're at the desktop.

2. Learn that the "Windows" key will switch between the Modern and Desktop screens.

3. Learn that the old W7 search from start menu is now the Modern screen itself, no box to type in, just get to Modern screen and start typing. NOTE: it only finds programs by default, if you want the results of settings (control panel, etc.), look just below where what you typed shows up. Ditto for files, vs. apps.

Escape will get you back to Modern screen and Windows key back to desktop.

Find shortcuts for sleep, shutdown, and restart (*hate* having to do many clicks to do that) and put on desktop or easily findable. (I can provide if asked for).

Lastly, use *sleep* all the time instead of shutdown. My older computer, running W8, is rarely rebooted at all. Mostly if a Windows update, or occasionally AVG update says to.

If you insist on doing the 8.1 upgrade, do make an image backup of your system first, as I can almost guarantee you'll want to go back if you do anything besides Web and word processing.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Win 8.1 Upgrade Agreement

[Regarding the December 6 Digital Dave column:]

Dave, I agree whole hardheartedly with your stance on upgrading to 8.1 from 8. The improvements seem minor at first, but if you use the Desktop almost exclusively and don't care about social media very much. You can easily setup Win 8.1 to look and act like Win 7

except for log on and off and the Windows key menu. Like Dave and Rich have said you can get the Win 7 look and feel back with several Start Menu replacement programs, most are free.

I like Win 8.1 because it doesn't hassle you if you cut the user safety interface down to 0 in the User Control program. I like Win 8.1 on a touchscreen or conventional desktop computer.

-Buck-O, El Cajon, CA

ComputorEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at ComputorEdge.com. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputorQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceeditor@computoredge.com. If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books.

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